

VA**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

News Release

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August 9, 2017**MSPB forces VA to take back fired official,
VA exploring all options under new accountability authorities**

On August 2, the Vice Chairman of the federal Merit Systems Protection Board ordered a stay of VA's removal of the former director of the Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center.

MSPB's stay order requires VA to return Brian Hawkins, fired on July 28, to work pending the Office of Special Counsel's review of Hawkins' claim that he was wrongly terminated.

VA has complied with the order and returned Hawkins to the payroll, but to an administrative position at the VA headquarters in Washington rather than to a patient-care position at the VA Medical Center.

"No judge who has never run a hospital and never cared for our nation's Veterans will force me to put an employee back in a position when he allowed the facility to pose potential safety risks to our Veterans," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "Protecting our Veterans is my most important responsibility."

The stay order came one day after the VA Office of Inspector General (VAOIG) issued a new report finding that Hawkins violated VA policy by sending sensitive VA information from his work email to unsecured private email accounts belonging to him and his wife.

VA will quickly make an assessment of Mr. Hawkins' employment using the new evidence and armed with the new authorities recently provided by the VA Accountability Act signed into law by President Trump in June.